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ABSTRACT

Reader-writer conferencing was examined as an alternative or complement to the direct assessment of writing. Criteria guiding development of a framework for analysis of reader-writer conferencing were summarized as: (1) achievability; (2) transfer to other domains of writing; (3) importance of the outcomes; (4) inter-scorer agreement; and (5) economy of assessment. The framework for analysis was a classification scheme with reader response recorded on a matrix form for reader response mode and focus, and writer response classified as stock or categorized; elaborations or explanations; and questions, corrections, or disagreements. Portrayal of the conferencing session was explored through the use of transcripts compared with the use of graphic and narrative summaries. The graphic and narrative method better allowed the teacher to analyze conferencing techniques. Attachments illustrate actual teacher-student conferences in terms of interactive actions/items (episodes, questions, prescribes, explains, supports, describes, associates, and manages). (SLD)

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The Portrayal of Reader-Writer Conferencing

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In a separate report (Della-Piana 1987) I concluded that there was a high probability of "inappropriate inference" from test scores inherent in the current statement of the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (APA 1985). If this conclusion is sound, it is not a trivial matter considering the high frequency of achievement testing in the schools (Wigdor and Garner 1982, p.153) and the cumulative effect of tests on the formation of student self evaluations which may affect actions year after year (Cronbach 1984, p. 23; Peterson and other 1984, pp. 487-515). What compounds the problem for the test user, and leads into the present paper, is that there has been little development of "alternative assessment". Thus, the test user, with little evidence and argument to support interpretations and uses of current achievement tests, is not even in a position to consider the information and value trade-offs of tests based on alternative domains of accomplishment. The project reported on here is one response to the situation in the interest of assessment that is user-considerate. It is an attempt to understand the possibilities of one kind of alternative assessment in the area of writing accomplishment. Reader-Writer Conferencing is explored as an alternative to or a complement to the direct assessment of writing. It is unlikely that one can understand the possibilities in alternative assessment without a rather thorough immersion in the processes to be assessed. This project provides that immersion for the investigator through an intensive analytic look at the conferencing of many teachers and an attempt to "portray" conferencing processes. Though the framework for analysis is briefly sketched here (for more detail see Della-Piana, Downing, and Morrison 1987), the emphasis of the present report is on portrayal forms and on preliminary reactions of teachers to a portrayal of their conferencing. The report is presented in four sections: Criteria guiding development of the framework, A brief sketch of the framework, Portrayal explorations, and Directions for research.

Criteria Guiding the Development of a Framework for Analysis of Reader-Writer Conferencing

No single theory of conferencing underlies the Reader:Writer (RW) Conferencing Analysis Procedures. The observation that "most of us are not even aware that we are operating from one of a number of possible points of view" (Emig and Parker 1976, p.10) and the assumption that there is as yet no empirically based prescriptive theory of conferencing, suggests three design criteria that form the theoretical base of the framework: First,

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to include elements of conferencing recommended in the literature on conferencing practice and observed by investigators in a wide range of contexts and levels of expertise. Second, to allow portrayal of one's approach in a manner that furthers one's self understanding as well as one's articulation and reflection upon one's own theory and practice of conferencing. Third, that it may externalize measurable processes relevant to research and training on writing including: ideational and motivational processes of the writer (experience, plans, goals, concerns, strategies, analysis and production), interpersonal processes of the writer in relation to the reader or conferencing partner(s), and characteristics of the writing (transcription, discourse structure and style, content and ideas). In addition to this theoretical base, five other criteria that guide development are briefly discussed here.

Domains of performance are specified to guide assessment "because we think somebody can accomplish them" (Hively 1974, p.143). Thus, achievability is a criterion. The fact that variations in conferencing style representing different underlying educational purposes and values have been observed in actual contexts of practice (e.g., Calkins 1983, 1986; Jacob 1982; Reigstad 1980) suggests that one is dealing with a variety of "achievable" domains. How broadly achievable in different populations or how susceptible to change through formal training, education, or self development is a matter for investigation.

Since one cannot teach toward nor assess all the achievable domains in any complex performance, transfer becomes a necessary criterion. Current achievement test development appears to pay little attention to a formal analysis of achievable domains of performance and selecting out and testing a subset that might generalize to others (See for example Popham 1978, p. 118f, 161, 162). That the transfer criterion is a difficult one to apply in practice in the domain of writing is apparent from what data there is suggesting little promise of generalizability of performance across discourse modes (Appleby 1984, pp. 582-584; Cooper and Matsuhashi 1983, p. 4f; Quellmalz 1984, pp. 29, 30; 1986, pp. 496, 497). The "process oriented domain" of RW Conferencing is assumed to have high potential for transfer across other domains of writing accomplishment. However, that is a matter for investigation and leads directly to the criterion of "importance".

If one looks for a subset of domains of performance that might generalize to other achievable domains one runs directly into the criterion of importance. One would want to teach toward and assess not only achievable domains but also important ones. Domain specification should be directed toward "significant" or educationally important outcomes (Cronbach 1971, p. 446; Yalow and Popham 1983, p.114). Also, there should be a specification of alternative domains of importance relevant to the specific

uses of information or interpretations to be made from assessment data (Linn 1983; Messick 1975, p.262; 1980, p.1020; Rosenthal 1983). Writers on literacy development have not neglected specification of broad alternative domains of accomplishment. Quellmalz (1986, p.493) identifies three alternative domains distinguished by a focus on discourse structures, functional writing required by personal and societal demands, and writing as a process of making meaning. Scribner (1986, pp. 7-22) discusses alternatives in terms of value choices entailed in three domains with different underlying metaphors: literacy as functional, socially empowering, and personally self ehancing. The importance of "RW conferencing" as a domain of accomplishment to guide assessment and instruction is based on three assumptions: First, since ultimately as a writer one "conferences with oneself" to produce and polish a piece of work, then exzternalizing that process in relation to others (teacher\peers) has educational value (Calkins 1983, Murray 1979, 1982). Second, the development of process assessment will allow the sorting out of roles and effects of process assessment and how it may complement the fast growing product assessment or direct assessment of writing (Educational Measurement (1984). Third, assessment that externalizes ideational and motivational processes of the writer , interpersonal processes of the writer/teacher/peer, and characteristics of the writing itself, holds promise for providing an "educative context" (Shulman 1984) for the teacher as well as for the student.

Since judgmental processes enter into the classification of statements from a one-to-one conferencing interaction, it is important that providing evidence on <u>interscorer agreement</u> be a development criterion. The level of agreement among scorers (scorings) should be appropriate to the specific interpretations or decisions to be made and should be specified with sources of variance identified.

Finally, all assessment has costs and selecting among alternative assessment approaches requires cost estimates in relation to the value of the expected or obtained information (Gilbert 1978). Thus, <u>economy of assessment</u> (the ratio of cost to value) should be a development criterion. Cost estimates should be made based on time/cost for setting up, obtaining, scoring, portraying and interpreting of the conference interactions. In summary the five criteria guiding development of the framework for analysis of RW Conferencing are: a theoretical base, achievability, transfer, importance, reliability, and economy.

A Brief Sketch of the Framework

The framework for analysis of RW Conferencing is a classification scheme that includes both reader response and page

writer response. Reader response is recorded in a matrix form. On one axis is reader response mode (questions, prescribes, explains, supports, describes, manages, associates). On the other axis is the focus of reader response including both a text-referenced focus (general, transcription and grammatical conventions, content and ideas, and discourse sturcture and style) and a writer-referenced focus (general; long term memory of plans, knowledge, and experience; concerns, persistence or motivation; and analysis /production of ideas or text). In addition, for each category of reader response mode, writer response mode is classified in three categories: stock or categorical responses; elaborations or explanations; and questions, corrections, or disagreements (Adapted from Jacob 1982, 1983).

A detailed description of the classification system and procedures as developed thus far is presented elsewhere (Della-Piana, Downing, and Morrison 1987). Preliminary reliabilities are reasonably high for reader response mode. Two out of three raters had 97% agreement over four conferences and all three raters had 73% agreement overall; however, there was variation from conference to conference. Writer response mode reliabilities are in the 90s. Reliabilities for reader focus of response were more modest ranging from a low of 41% agreement for all three raters on a cell by cell basis to 84% for two out of three raters. Combining categories into "text-referenced" and "writer-referenced" yielded 66% agreement across all three raters and 100% agreement for two out of three raters.

Portrayal Explorations

How might one "portray" a reader/writer conferencing session so that participants (to begin with the teacher/reader) may get some sense of their own point of view or approach and a sense of other possible perspectives? In this section of the report two forms of portrayal are described using illustrative material from teacher/student conferences.

The Transcript as Portrayal: Ms Nalley -- not formally trained in conferencing.

Ms Nalley is a first grade teacher in her third year of teaching. She asked her students to write about "daydreams". The prewriting was not extensive. The class shared their recall of recent or memorable daydreams. Ken wrote a paper titled "Day Dream". The paper and a transcription of Ms Nalley's conference is presented in Attachment A. Ms Nalley had another student join the conference (Erin) but as will be seen he did not get much involved. To say that Ms Nalley was not formally "trained" in conferencing means in this case that she was given a guide to "ways of responding" to student writing based on Moffett (1981,

pp. 21-25) but was left on her own to use it or not. At this point in her experience at least she had not seen the "ways of responding" modeled nor was she given feedback on her own conferencing.

The researcher asked Ms Nalley if she would read over the transcription of her conference and "write in" comments on parts where she thought another reader might misinterpret or not understand what she was about or where she herself was not satisfied with either her response or the response from the student. Those comments by the teacher are recorded in brackets in the Attachment A transcript.

If one examines Ms Nalley's comments on her own conferencing transcript, one sees the parts of the total process where she puts her attention and the parts she ignores. Ms Nalley expressed no dissatisfaction with the conference. Her comments "explain" what she was about. Aside from trying to clarify what Ken wrote (partly because the spelling was difficult to decode and partly not being clear about his "voice" or who he was - dinosaur or himself - , Ms Nalley seemed to be operating from an "ideal text" (Knoblauch and Brannon 1984; Brannon and Knoblauch 1982) which Ken's story did not fit. To her a daydream about dinner could not include a dinosaur even though the class had been reading about dinosaurs. Since it was Ken's daydream one would expect the teacher to focus more on <u>his</u> goals and plans and the nature of <u>his</u> daydream. Reading her transcribed conference did <u>not</u> cause her to see that she was missing Ken's point of view nor that her questions yielded categorical or short answer responses almost exclusively. The two exceptions to Ken's catgegorical responses were when Ken was correcting her interpretations. He wrote "ice cream ... for dessert" and she said "for dinner". Also, she thought Ken was the dinosaur, but he did not intend that. Nor did Ms Nalley note that most of her responses were closed questions, or that few were "active listening" or describing or mirroring back to Ken what he seemed to be saying or trying to do, or that none were explanations of the effect of specific text characteristics on other aspects of the text or on the reader. Nor did she note that while the writer made a large number of responses in the session (about 45% of all responses) most were categorical and that if the session were broken into "episodes" (segments focusing on one topic) there were four episodes, all initiated by the teacher. This kind of response to one's own conferencing as presented in transcript form is not uncommon among teachers with no specific training in conferencing with students. There have been notable exceptions in cases this investigator has looked at, but they typically are teachers who took the "ways of responding" checklist and "tried out" different ways of responding as well as "sought out" feedback. It does appear from the experience of this investigator thatg this kind of portrayal does not not generate the kind of understanding one would hope for, at least

with a population of teachers "untrained" in conferencing in sense described here.

In the next illustration of the "transcript as portrayal" a different picture emerges. In this case the teacher is a preservice elementary school teacher in a field-based course in language arts instruction. Ms Daniels and others in the course were introduced to "conferencing" both by modeling and by provision of examples of "ways of responding" again based on Moffet's work (Moffett 1981, pp. 21-25). At this point Ms Daniels had received no direct feedback on her conferencing with children. She had received some feedback on a "class" basis in which the instructor observed the preservice teachers in class conferencing with each other and put examples up on the board to comment upon. In addition she had received written feedback on a transcript of her conferencing with another preservice teacher on his/her writing.

Ms Daniels prepared a lesson plan for a fourth grade class in which student writing took off from Rockwell's (1979) version of an old folk tale called The Three Sillies. It is a "numskull" type of story about people who see trouble everywhere even before it appears. A farmer's daughter goes to the cellar to draw cider for her suitor and parents. She sees a hatchet stuck in an overhead beam and imagines the terror of what might happen if she marries and has a son and sends him to the cellar to draw cider and the hatchet falls on him. So she sits down and weeps with the cider barrel spigot open and cider running all over the floor. Soon she is joined by her mother and father who do the same. When the suitor comes down and finds out what is going on he laughs, pulls the hatchet out of the beam, and calls them the "three sillies". He says he will leave and if he finds three bigger sillies he will come back and marry the daughterr. He does.

Ms Daniels took the fourth grade students through much prewriting activity including having them poredict what happens next as she read the story to them, introduction of other "three" stories, talk about possible endings before reading the ending in the story, and drawing and discussing illustrations for the story. The writing asignment provided options to change the ending, create a new "sillies" story, rewrite the story with a different voice or perspective (e.g., suitor as silly) or write a convincing argument concerning a moral for the story.

A transcription of Ms Daniels' taped conference with one student (Zona) is presented as Attachment B along with Zona's writing for the assignment.

The researcher asked Ms Daniels to make comments on her own conferencing (or "coachilng and consulting" as it was called in the course in which Ms Daniels was enrolled). Some of the major

observations she made are noted below. Numbers in parentheses correspond to numbered segments of teacher response in the transcript. Letters in parentheses correspond to lettered segments of student response in the transcript.

Ms Daniels expressed three satisfactions with her conferencing. First, that the student "was able to see another point of view" (5). This was in reference to Zona wanting to "explain who the lady was" who answered the door at the end of the story and Ms Daniels suggesting that the effect on her was making her "want to read on to find out". Second, that it helped to "keep asking my question in a different way" (6,7,8). This was in reference to Zona saying that a segment of the story was boring and Ms Daniels pressing for what might make it more interesting. Third, that "I was describing what effect the story had on me" (9) in reference to the ending which "caught me by surprise".

Three major concerns about her own conferencing were expressed by Ms Daniels. First, that she would "get more of her [Zona's] ideas generated into the conversation" (b,d). Second, that there were too many "don't know" or "shrugging" responses (c,f,g,i,k) suggesting that maybe "I intimidated her". Third, that maybe my "doing all the talking" kept Zona from participating and that my questions could be restated like, "Where is your favorite part"? Not, Do you have ..." (10). A number of other concerns were expressed including the following: students had a hard time choosing -- they expected to be told everything, students had a hard time discussing, and I didn't know much about the students' backgounds.

What is apparent is that a simple transcription as a portrayal of a conference did, in the hands of a well prepared and motivated teacher, serve to bring to awareness the nature and effects of her conferencing and to stimulate the teacher to explore different approaches and work toward new goals. That is the positive effect observed in this exploration.

The downside from a practical perspective is twofold -- effort required and complexity encountered. A highly motivated student teacher with intensive training appears to benefit much and be willing to put in the work needed. The question is, can such effort be obtained in other contexts of work? Also, when one matches the processes that Zona externalized and came to grips with against a template such as that offered by Messick's (1984, 1987) discussions of comprehensive assessment in context, the complexity of the teacher's task becomes apparent. In spite of the effort and complexity involved, this investigator is encouraged by the fact that even a novice teacher in training is able by looking at a transcript portrayal of her conferencing to identify characteristics of instructional quality (the form of questions I ask ... etc.), characteristics of the student

(interdependencies between student motivation, confidence and initiative and performance on a task; e.g., they expect to be told everything and they may be intimidated), and the possibility that characteristics of the sociocultural environment may be of importance (e.g., wondering about the student's experiential background and learning opportunities relevant to task performance).

In summary the concern is the effort and complexity involved in grasping, interpreting, and using relevant information externalized in the conferencing process. The encouraging part is that a simple instructional and portrayal process begins to externalize these variables in a discriminable way even for a novice teacher.

The Graphic and Narrative Summary as Portrayal

Now the discussion moves to a different kind of portrayal for a different kind of teacher -- a relatively "expert" teacher in conferencing, at least by training and reputation. The importance of this move is that in spite of the utility of the transcript portrayal, too much is missed. Perhaps with a more structured and comprehensive portrayal in the hands of an "expert" a greater number of relevant discriminations will be made.

Ms Connors is an intermediate school teacher who has participated in in-depth training in classes and workshops focused on a process approach to writing including prewriting, drafting, peer and teacher feedback, revision, final editing, and publication or performance. She is a reflective teeacher. That is, she does not simply "play out" the script given to her in workshops and courses. She evolves her own sense of process and priorities. Evidence? Catch her in the hall and she will tell you about changes in how she is forming peer groups or the percentage of time she now spends in prewriting and why. Go into the classroom and you will hear her explaining the changes to the students and introducing them to the new procedures. She now spends two thirds of the time on any writing project on prewriting tasks -- clustering, outlining, brainstorming, and drawing out details and personal experiences from students. Yet it varies with the student group and the writing task. Little time is assigned for writing at home. Most drafting is done in school. Feedback is central to her writing instruction from prewriting all the way to final editing.

A transcript of Ms Connors' conference with Eda is presented along with Eda's writing and a graphic portrayal of the conference. This portrayal is rather overwhelming in the amount of information crammed into one small space. What was sought was comprehensiveness rather than simplicity. Time enough for

simplicity later, but not until the possibilities of this kind of assessment and portrayal are more clearly understood. The discussion to follow will focus on clarifying what is there, in the portrayal, while at the same time reporting on Ms Connors' response to the portrayal.

First, notice that the column headed "associates" has no responses in it. Remarks which fit that category simply tell about one's own personal experience related to the content or structure of the student's text or the student's ideas or writing process. This is a rare response mode in cases we have looked at. The most notable example of this kind of responding that we have found is in C. S. Lewis Letters to Children, edited by Dorsett and Mead. For example, slightly paraphrasing C.S. Lewis responding to a letter from one of his young correspondents, "Your dreams were lovely and you describe them well. When I was young, all my dreams were horrors (Dorsett and Mead 1985, p.48). Ms Connors' response to this omission in her conferencing was that it "is disturbing" because "students learn more from people they know. If I'd shared some of my own experiences with Eda, it might enhance her own experiences -- and writing".

Ms Connors was pleased to find "prescribing" and "manages/orients" low in her conferencing session because "writers need to be in charge of their own thinking". On the other hand she noted that the most frequent responses used by her were "describing, supporting, and questioning". She was pleased by this because all these response modes have the potential effect for "decisions of change and addition/deletion " to be "left to the student", and that is "good". She was disturbed by her "prescriptions", not because of their frequency (they were rare) but because "they were too directive" and because I "took more responsibility for the story than I wished to".

Ms Connors had a mixed reaction to the kinds of student responses she obtained in this conferencing session. In the graphic representation, student responses are indicated by capital letters where they follow a teacher response. "C" is for categorical or short answers, "E" is for elaborations or explanations, and "Q" is for questions to the reader or corrections of the reader's interpretation or recommendation. Noting that 38% of Eda's responses were categorical, Ms Connors commented, "categorical responses are probably important to establish in a beginning conference. Later on I don't think ...so. I'd hope for substantial elaboration". As a matter of fact, 51% of Eda's responses were elaborations or explanations. What about a theory of responding? Ms Connors puts it this way: "... I don't know enough about each kind of student response to a reader ... [e.g.] do I think it's advantageous to see [student] elaboration after [my] 'support' or after 'describes or mirrors' ... it would vary from student to student depending on confidence."

On the observation that 40% of all responses in the conference were made by the student, Ms Connors comments, "I'd rather see it reversed. The author ought to be in charge both in explaining and in making decisions of what needs to be done next".

On focus of response being mainly on "content or ideas" and the writer's "long term memory" or knowledge, experience, and strategies; it's okay, that focus makes sense, but we might also have focused our talk more on "discourse structure or style". Yet she notes, "It's early in the year" and though it was "an early draft" (and therefore had no comments on conventions such as spelling, punctuation, etc. and ordinarily should have had some emphasis on "structure" at this stage), it is important to know that Eda was very good at structure, "structure is important to her", and it may not have shown up because of that.

In a debriefing session after Ms Connors' written response to the portrayal highlighted above, she added the following: "[It was] a rough conference". I was "uncomfortable" with it. A conference should "come out of the student's ideas. I can give structure or information ... but [the dialogue] must grow out of the student's ideas."

What is apparent from this exploration of graphic and narrative summary as portrayal, is that a teacher with considerable training in writing as a process is able to draw upon a broad range of knowledge to analyze her own conferencing in ways that reveal elements of a theory of conferencing and acknowledged areas of "not knowing". Also, it is apparent that to fully grasp the possibilities in this kind of portrayal one would have to collect transcripts of conferencing sessions over a longer period and with students representing different sorts of writing development. For example, Ms Connors noted that her lack of focus on "discourse structure" may have been because of Eda handling it well. For another student, another writing task with different structure for the same student, or a different time of the year for this teacher, the picture might be different -- at least it would be a more complete picture.

Directions for Research

The research on portrayal of reader-writer conferencing is at a primitive stage of development. But it is nevertheless time to stand back to see where it might best go. Issues of assessment cost should probably not be a concern at this stage of development. Irrelevant assessment or assessment which contributes to a high probability of "inappropriate inference" is costly indeed. Whether the path taken in the research reported here leads to "economical assessment" (i.e., where the information value is worth the cost and is relevant to situations

where typical performance of importance is much lower than observed mastery or expert performance) is certainly a matter for continuous examination. However, until the possibilities of this sort of assessment are better understood, matters of cost or economy are premature. In that spirit, what is worth pursuing?

A preliminary framework for analysis of reader/writer conferencing is now available to the investigator as a research tool. There must certainly be infinite possibilities in the use of such a tool. The two proposals to be made here are simply those which have salience for this investigator at this time. What the proposals are and why they have salience for this investigator is what will conclude the paper.

The major limiting variable in the proposals to be made is that they should be in search of information that contributes to the self understanding of the teacher with respect to the nature, the effects, and the possibilities of his/her contribution to student writing in all the three senses of literacy discussed by Scribner (1986, pp. 7-22); for functional or job performance, for social empowerment, and for personal self enhancement.

Writer Response

It was seen that Ms Connors obtained a large percentage of student "elaborative or explaining" responses in her conference. She appeared to accomplish this feat through actively "listening" to the student using questioning, describing or mirroring, and supporting responses. The literature on writer response appears to suggest a consensus that the teacher as reader (or peer as reader) should draw out the writer to comment upon, elaborate, think about, and take control of his/her own writing for his/her own purposes while 'taking into account" the comments of the teacher or peer reader (e.g., Brannon and Knoblauch 1982, p. 159; Calkins 1986; Jacob 1982, 1983; Knoblauch and Brannon 1984, ch. 6; Murray 1979; and Reigstad 1981). The literature on conferencing practice and the research literature suggest that "student-centered" conferences (in which the tutor or reader mostly listens and the student talks) are most effective for achieving the outcomes of the consensus view on writer response noted above. But what is listening? For Ms Connors it was accomplished mostly by questioning, describing, and supporting. For another teacher we studied the same effects were achieved by use of questioning, explaining, and supporting. For these teachers and others reported upon in the literature, what seems most critical to this observer is that "prescriptions are based upon or follow shared understanding of reader and writer as to what the writer is about and what the writing 'says' to both the reader and writer". But it appears that this can be accomplished in different ways. With the "framework for analysis" one might explore the effect of different patterns (sequences) of responses that precede prescriptions and yield appropriate writer

responses. One would need such information before one could develop portrayals for modeling, feedback, and discussion with novice teachers to move with them toward some kind of expertise.

Writer as Reader

The focus on teacher or reader response to writing would have limited educative value if the writer did not ultimately become the reader or responder to his/her own writing. In other words, the writer as reader (or what Donald Murray calls the writer's "other self") must take over the function of teacher (Calkins 1983, pp. 125f; Graves 1983; Koblauch and Brannon 1984, p.126; Moffet and Wagner 1983, pp. 511, 512; and Murray 1969, 1982). The above theorists describe such a process and some of them present evidence that students do internalize conferencing processes previously experienced with teachers and peers (e.g., Calkins 1983, pp. 125-141). However, if the "writer as reader" is the aim of peer/writer and teacher/writer conferencing, then ther extent to which this transition takes place (rather than the fact that it sometimes does) and the conditions under which it takes place, seem worthy of study. The framework for analysis of reader-writer conferencing allows more formal study of such a transition. This kind of research is necessary before one could begin to develop portrayals for modeling feedback and discussion with teachers, peer responders, and the student as reader of his/her own writing. Some of the investigator's thinking on portrayal that complements the current work is included in and referenced in other publications (Della-Piana and Della-Piana 1984, Della-Piana 1985).

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DELLA-PIAZZA
CONFERENCING
PORTRAYAL

Attachment A

Ms Nalley and Ken

NOTE: Numbers refer to Ms Nalley and letters to Ken. Comments in brackets are Ms Nalley's observations upon reading the typed transcript of the session.

Assignment: Writing About "Day Dreams"

1. Why don't you read us your story K.

a. (reads) "I wunts had a Day Drem it was dinr I will tell you it Mmm ok in the mitll of math I had it and it was yumy I Day Dremed of coclit chip iscrinm and cookys for dsrt and ris for dinr I no a Dinosaurs wood not like that aseshle a Brontosaurs and I thot that I vas going to have my fravit casrll that day Drim"

2. Okay. That's a good story K. Okay.

3. (Reads) "I once had a day dream. It was..." Can you tell me what it was? (Points to the word "dinr")

b. "...dinner" [I wasn't sure what the word was]

4. (reads) "I will tell you it Mmm ok in the mitll of Math I had it and it was yumy I Day Dremed of coclit chip Iscrinm and cookys for dsrt and rice for dinr I no a Dinosaurs wood not like that..." What's this? (Pointing to the next word, "aseshle")

c. Especially

5. Okay. "...a Brontosaurus and I thot that I was going to have my fravit casrll that day " Is that the end of the sentence? (This is said at this point although the word "Drm" follows "day")

d. Yah.

6. Did you get to finish your story? [The story didn't seem to make sense to me. I wasn't sure it was finished]

e. Unh-unh.

7. How do you feel about your story?

f. Pretty good.

8. Okay, right here (pointing back to the beginning of the story). You were sitting in math class right? [I was trying to see why he put in anything about a Dinosaur]

g. M-hm

9. And you were dreaming about having ice cream and cookies for dinner.

h. No, for dessert.

10. Okay. So why did you put in "I know a dinosaur would not like that, especially a Brontosaurus"?

i. I wanted to. [I thought maybe he was pretending to be a dinosaur]

11. Okay, were you daydreaming about a dinosaur having...

j. M-hm.

12. So it was your daydream or a dinosaur's daydream? [I wasn't sure what she was trying to say]

k. Mine.

13. Okay, so were you a dinosaur?

l. No.

14. So why did you stick in "... a dinosaur would not like that especially a Brontosaurus"? [I knew a lot of kids had been asking how to spell different Dinosaurs names. And I was wondering if she had just decided to put this in.]

m. I don't know.

15. Is that going along with your daydream or did you just decide to stick it in there?

n. I decided to stick it in there.

16. Does it have anything to do with the rest of the story then?

o. No.

17. Would you have to put it in there?

p. No.

18. Okay, how could you change that so it was just about your dinner?

q. Take out the dinosaurs.

19. Okay...good job. Okay.

20. So we'll leave this part out maybe (circles "Dinosaurs wood not like that aseshle a Brontosaurs")

21. and maybe you can write another story. Maybe the next time you write a story you can write about the dinosaur.

r. M-hm.

22. Okay. Good job.

[I want the students to feel their story is good, but it is very hard not judging or changing it to what I think it should say ... I might have responded differently if ... hadn't been there]

Attachment B

Conference transcript for Ms Daniels and Zona (a fifth grade student).

Assignment: Writing options based on story of The Three Sillies.

Numbered statements are Ms D and lettered statements are Zona

1. O.K. Zona, what option did you choose to do? Did you choose to write more sillies? Is that what you did?

a. No, I chose to write a new ending. (Zona's paper is transcribed below)

> He serched for five years but could only find two sillie situtuation. But one day he went to a house. It was a pink house. He knoked on the door and a beutiful lady anseved the door. Oh, you'v come back. I didn't think you would. Are you one of the sillies I use to know? "yes". She said bout the apple cider? "yes". So he decided not to look for more sillies and he married her.
>
> The End

2. I like the way you start, "that he searched for five years" because that captured my attention and made me wonder, "wow, in five yars he was still searching?" It m;ade me want to read on and find out what happened. It's suspenseful to me here where you say he went to a pink house and a beautiful lady answered the door. Because at first I thought he was going to fall in love with someone else, and I felt bad for his sillie left at home.

b. Uh huh

3. Why did you mark that you weren't sure about this, or that it wouldn't be understandable?

c. Um ... I don't know, I just ... I don't know ... It doesn't tell who the lady was ... so ...

4. Would you like it better if you had explained who the lady was?

d. Uh huh

5. Isn't that interesting" That's what I liked about it. That it didn't tell who she was ... it made me want to read on and find out if he fell in love with someone else ... o.k. and then they got married. Why did you put that you didn't like this part ... "But one day he went to a house"?

e. It's kind of boring ... that he went to a house.

6. Why do you think ... or what do you think could make it more interesting?

f. I don't know.

7. Can you think of something that you would be more happy with there?

g. Maybe that he was just looking for somewhere to stay or something? I don't know.

8. Why would you have him doing that?

h. It gives him something to do ... or a reason to be knocking on a door.

9. That's a good idea ... I hadn't even thought about that ... But that gives him some direction instead of having him haphazardly knocking on the door.... I especially like your ending ... it caught me by surprise ... I didn't think he'd marry her without finding one more sillie. What do you like best about your story?

i. I don't know.

10. Do you have a favorite part ... or something you're really pleased with here?

j. Not really ... um ... maybe the surprise that he knocked on the door of the sillie he left five years ago.

11. That was an imaginative choice for a new ending. What if you chose to make the ending sad instead of happy? How would that change your story?

k. (Shrugs her shoulders) I wantedit to end happy.

12. If you had more time to write, what would you add to this?

l. Nothing.

13. O.K. Zona, thanks for sharing that with me. I liked your story because it's got a surprise element and you use nice descriptive words ... pink, beautiful, etc. Thank you Zona.

Attachment C

Ms Connors (C) and Eda (E). (Segmented for classification)

Assignment: Writing about an experience in elementary school

1. C: So, the first thing that I'd like you to do is just read it to me ... all the way through.

2. And then what I'm going to do after you read it is try to remember all the things that you tell me and then I'm going to tell it back to you.

a. E: When I was in kindergarten my teacher's name was Mrs. L. She was my second most favorite teacher. (My favorite teacher was Mrs. B.) Her name fit her well because she was short and slender. We learned the alphabet in that class and we had letter people to help us remember and we did ditto sheets about them. There are three people that I remember from my class. They are A, M, and C. One day I wanted to play house but A wouldn't let me. I was mad at her so I just played blocks and had a great time. M was kind of retarded. She was always rubbing her hands together. One day she wet her pants during story time. Lots of people teased her about it, but I don't think she really cared. The last person was C. She couldn't go to the bathroom by herself so the teacher would have someone help her. The last thing I remember about kindergarten was snack time and nap time. I thought kindergarten was great.

3. C: Okay. Ah, sounds to me like it's a ... kind of overall memories of kindergarten that you've taken that one year.

4. Ah, at the beginning you said that it was Mrs. L and ... Mrs. B?

b. (M-hm).

5. And Mrs. L was your favorite teacher?

c. (M-hm).

6. And then ... the name was to fit Mrs. L because ... or did the name ... which one of them was little or small or short ...

d. (Mrs. L).

7. Okay, okay, so she is the one whose name ... fit. I wasn't sure ... maybe because ... because you told about Mrs. L and not about Mrs. B ... but you weren't going back ... but then I figured out that it was ... that the name must fit Mrs. L because

e. (I had the parentheses).

8. Okay, so the parentheses helps to separate those two ...

9. and then you write about three friends ... ah ... and the first one is A and she is the one who wouldn't play that day ...

f. (no, she wouldn't let me play ... she was just being kind of mean that day)

10. Uh huh ... was she usually mean ...

g. (Not usually) ...

11. Uh huh, just that time ... and so that was when you played with blocks by yourself and had a great time.

12. And then, the second one was the one who was ... retarded

13. and it's interesting that you remember that she rubbed her hands together ... a lot.

14. Ah ... something ... that couldn't go to the bathroom by herself ... because ... she needed help.

h. (Yah, I guess she was just scared. I don't know. Hah hah.)

15. Ah, maybe you, I wonder if maybe you want to add something explaining a little more about why she didn't want to go by herself.

16. Because if she were in kindergarten, ah, everything in the bathroom is scaled down and it's real little for kindergarten children and you're always surprised when you go back and you look at the toilets and they're about one foot off the floor.

17. But maybe if you explain about, about what you might have thought about C ... about why ...

18. Ah, now that you have typed this on the computer, do you see some things that you would want to make changes in ... in it?

i. E: Yah, probably ... write more about the snack time and the nap time. Ah, you know ... like how we got it. Who was giving us the snacks or whatever ... the fourth graders would do that.

19. C: Huh! Uh huh.

j. E: Nap time, I don't remember too much about that but ... ah

20. C: Tell me about snack time. What do you remember about it

k. E: Ah ... we'd have either milk or punch, it depended upon what day it was. And then we got cookies or crackers ...

21. Uh huh.

1. ... it depended upon what day it was ... usually we would have vanilla wafers or graham crackers or something like that.

22. (Uh huh)

23. C: You might want to put that in.

24. How about ... any additions to what you already have down about the teachers or the friends who were in that ... would you add anything to those?

m. E: Well, I had something on the rough draft but I crossed it out about ...

n. Mrs. L came to my house one day. I don't know what she was doing but, hah, it really wasn't because I was doing bad or ...

25. (Ah huh)

o. So I was kind of unhappy about that, but I kind of scratched that out because it made it very long.

26. (Uh huh)

p. So. Ah, I could add that Mrs. B was my third grade teacher.

27. C: Was she in kindergarten too?

q. E: No, a third grade teacher.

28. C: Oh, the third grade teacher! I see. Okay. Alright,

29. C: yes, I think that would clarify that.

30. Ah, is there anything else that you would add?

r. E: I don't think so.

31. C: Okay. If you ... clarify that part about Mrs. B, then that means everything else here happened in kindergarten. Right?

s. E: Yah.

32. C: Uh huh. So that, that makes it all fit in with your first sentence.

t. E: Right ... uh ... well I was just adding that Mrs. B was my favorite and Mrs. L was the second favorite.

33. C: Uh huh ... Uh huh. Okay I think that would help too

34. C: to say that Mrs. L was your second favorite teacher because that would let the reader know why Mrs. B popped into your mind then when you were thinking about Mrs. L.

u. E: If I was writing this in K. that wouldn't have been.

35. C: The thing that is interesting is the way you remember, the kinds of things you remember ... the time ... A was being mean and wouldn't play ... that sticks out in your mind.

36. How did you feel toward A when you were playing by yourself with blocks?

v. E: I still don't really like her that much. Heh.

37. C: You mean she is still here?

w. E: In the school. Yah.

38. C: Oh!

x. E: I mean she is not really my favorite person. I can get along with her, but ... she is not one of my ... best friends.

39. C: Uh huh. I don't know that you would want to put that in

y. E: I didn't want to write ... things or anything cause ...

40. C: Because there are people here who might ...

z. E: Well, only one of them, A's the only one that's here but

41. C: Uh huh. Would you want to put in any of your feelings as you were playing with the blocks ... at that time ...

aa. E: I don't exactly remember.

bb. I just went over to play with the blocks cause that's about the only thing else I could do.

42. C: Uh huh.

cc. E: So I was just kind of angry at her.

43. C: Okay, is there anything else that you think you would want to add to it?

dd. E: I don't think so.

44. C: Alright, I think it sounds fine.

45. Well, tomorrow we'll take it into a response group and you'll get some other opinions about it and maybe some suggestions and hear some other people's too.

ee. (Uh huh)

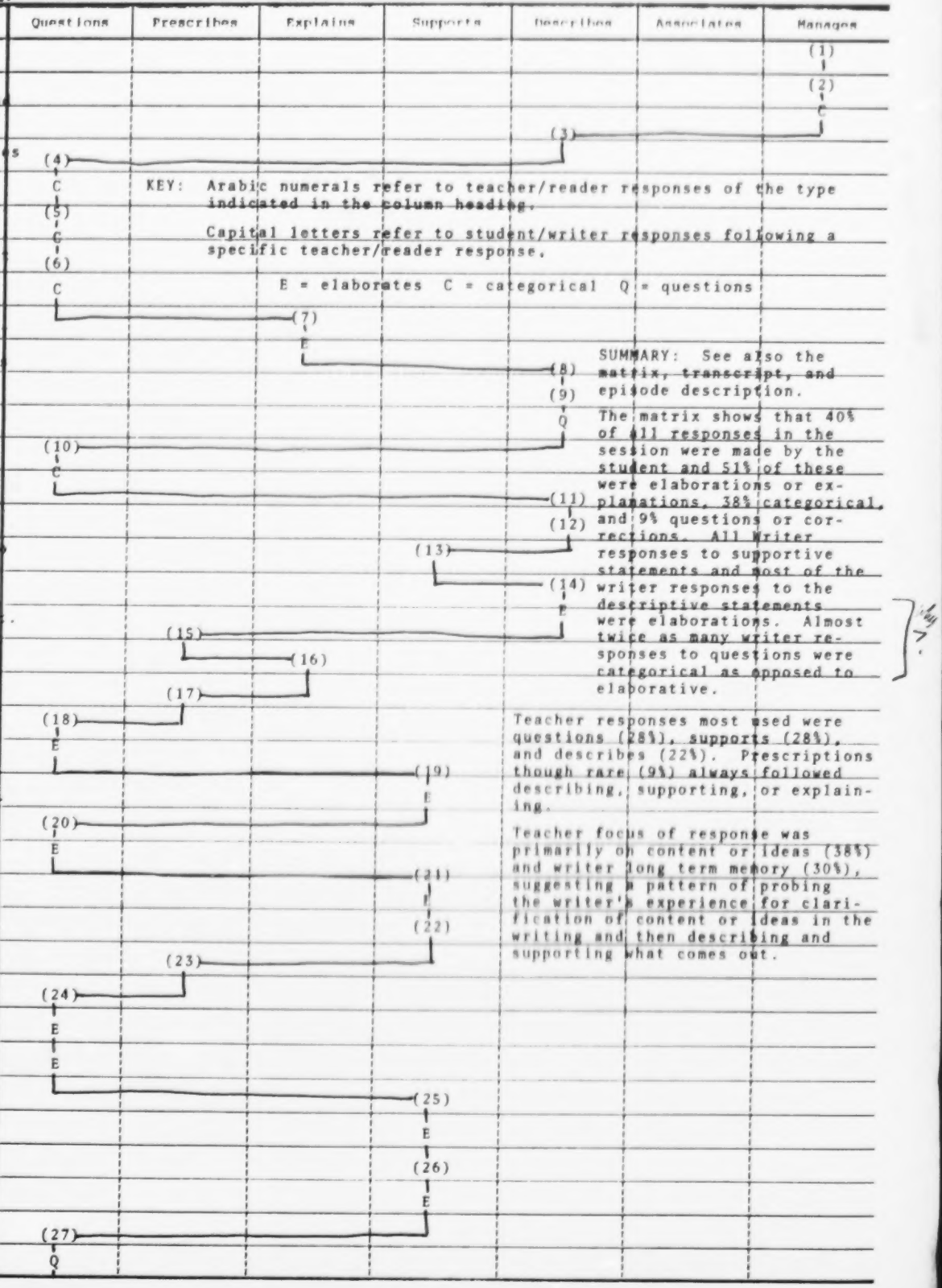
46. Thanks a lot.

Reader-Writer Conferencing: Graphic Portrayal

Teacher (Mrs.C) : T Topic: An experience in elementary school (kindergarten)

Writer (F) : W Session: This was a grade 8 classroom

Peer ( ) : P Date:


Episodes
Questions
Prescribes
Explains
Supports
Describes
Associates
Manages
(1) to (14)
T asks W to read her paper aloud and then "I'll tell it back to you" W reads. T describes (retells) plot (3) & probes for more clarification (4,5 6) on two characters she is not clear on. T gets it clear, describes (retells) more of story (8,9), but W who briefly acknowledged retelling up to now, corrects part of retelling. T. probes more for clarification (10) and goes on describing and supporting story.
(15) to (17)
T suggests adding detail on why one childe could not go to bathroom alone, explains why it is necessary, & then prescribes doing it.
(18) to (23)
T asks W if she sees things to change. W suggests more detail on snack time and nap time. T probes for detail and suggests putting it in. Throughout, T briefly acknowledges (uh-huh) Ws comments.
(24) to (34)
T asks W if she has anything to add about teachers and friends involved. W tells of something on rough draft but says she scratched it out because it was too long and suggests adding clarification on which was the Kindergarten teacher and which the third grade teacher.
KEY: Arabic numerals refer to teacher/reader responses of the type indicated in the column heading.
Capital letters refer to student/writer responses following a specific teacher/reader response.
E = elaborates C = categorical Q = questions
SUMMARY: See also the matrix, transcript, and episode description.
The matrix shows that 40% of all responses in the session were made by the student and 51% of these were elaborations or explanations, 38% categorical, and 9% questions or corrections. All Writer responses to supportive statements and most of the writer responses to the descriptive statements were elaborations. Almost twice as many writer responses to questions were categorical as opposed to elaborative.
Teacher responses most used were questions (28%), supports (28%), and describes (22%). Prescriptions though rare (9%) always followed describing, supporting, or explaining.
Teacher focus of response was primarily on content or ideas (38%) and writer long term memory (30%), suggesting a pattern of probing the writer's experience for clarification of content or ideas in the writing and then describing and supporting what comes out.

Reader-Writer Conferencing: Graphic Portrayal

Teacher (Mrs. C) : T Topic: An experience in elementary school

Writer (E) : W Session: This was a grade 8 classroom

Peer ( ) : P Date: